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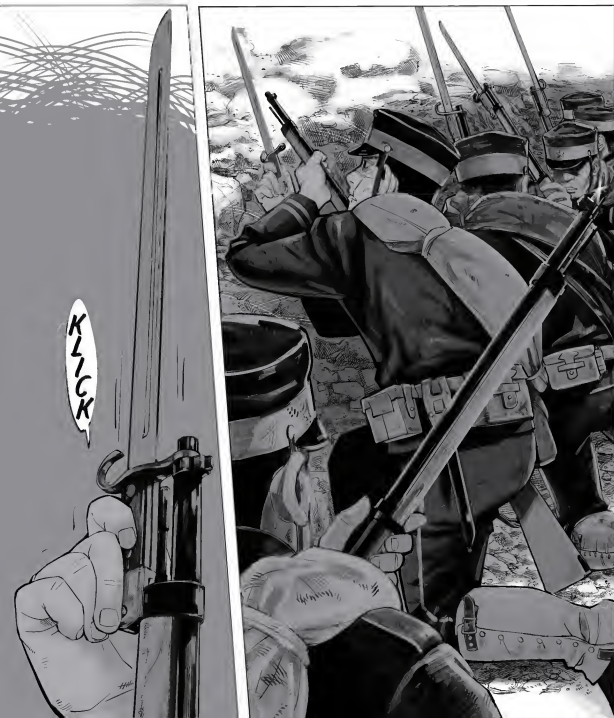
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT
CONTENT

Story and Art by **Satoru Noda**

THE
YEAR 15
MEIJI 37
(1904).

203
METER
HILL.

Chapter 1: Immortal Sugimoto





Chapter 1
Immortal Sugimoto

Story and Art by Satoru Noda

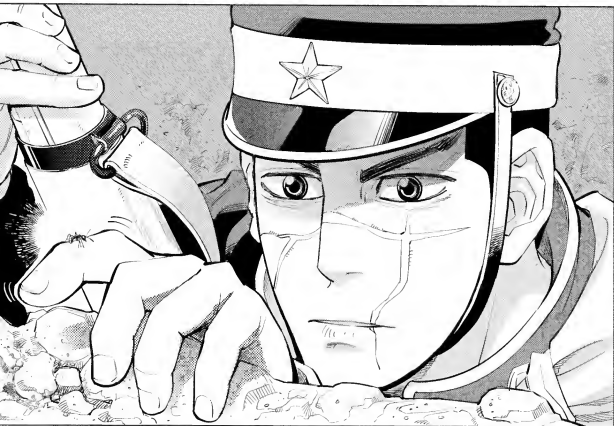
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GOLDEN KAMUY



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Story and Art by **Satoru Noda**



I'M NOT
GONNA
DIE HERE.

WORSE
COMES
TO
WORST, I'LL
TAKE A BITE
OUT OF
A RUSSIAN.

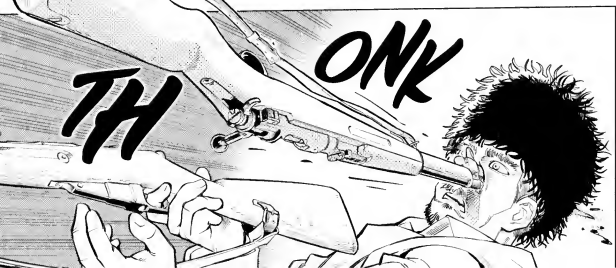


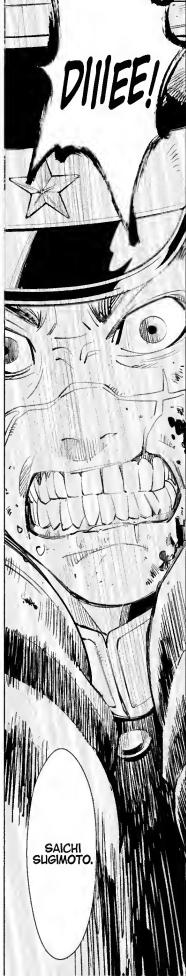
I'M
STARVING
...

PTOO

UGH...!
IT'S SO
SOUR.







SAICHI
SUGIMOTO.



TRY
TO
KILL
ME!





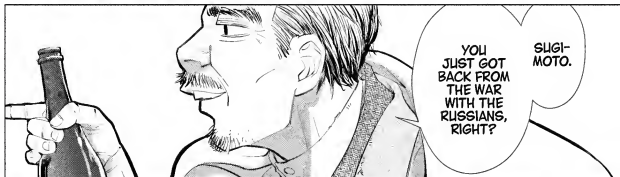




I'D BE EVEN MORE OUT OF MY DEPTH AS A HUNTER.

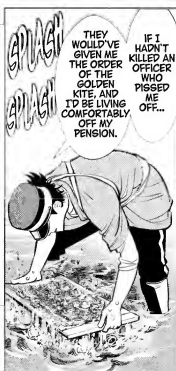


PELTS ARE SELLIN' LIKE CRAZY THESE DAYS. YOU COULD MAKE YOURSELF SOME GOOD MONEY.



SUGI-MOTO.







YOU
WANNA
HEAR AN
INTERESTING
STORY?



HIC

I'M
LETTIN' YOU
IN ON THIS
BECAUSE I
LIKE YOU.

DON'T
TELL
ANYONE
ABOUT IT.

IT'S
ABOUT
SOME
GOLD.

PSST
PSST

*AN OLD JAPANESE SILVER COIN. 30 MONME = 112 GRAMS.



THEY
GATHERED
A **HUGE**
AMOUNT
OF GOLD.

THEY
WERE
GONNA
FIGHT BACK
AGAINST THE
JAPANESE
WHO HAD
STOLEN
THEIR LAND
AND BANNED
'EM FROM
FISHIN' AND
HUNTIN'.

...A
GROUP OF
AINU WAS
SECRETLY
GATHERIN'
FLINDS TO
BUILD AN
ARMY.

AND
'ROUND
THAT
TIME...



IT WAS
A **GOLD**
RUSH.

PEOPLE
COULD
FIND 30
MONME*
OF GOLD
DAY
AFTER
DAY.

BACK
THEN,
THERE
WERE
GOLD
PIECES
THE SIZE
OF BEANS
IN EVERY
RIVER IN
HOK-
KAIDO.

AND HE
KILLED
EVERY
SINGLE
ONE OF
THE AINU
GUARDING
IT.

THEN ONE
MAN STOLE
EVERYTHING.

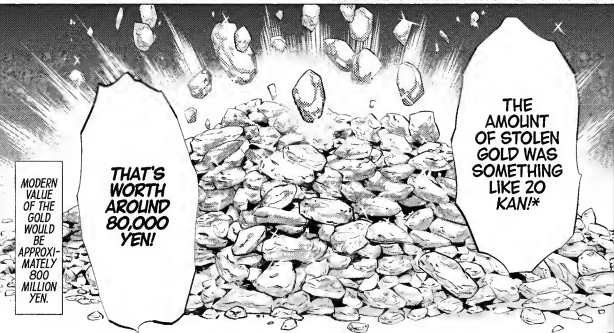


*OLD JAPANESE UNIT OF MASS. 20 KAN = 75 KILOGRAMS.

MODERN
VALUE
OF THE
GOLD
WOULD
BE
APPROXI-
MATELY
800
MILLION
YEN.

THAT'S
WORTH
AROUND
80,000
YEN!

THE
AMOUNT
OF STOLEN
GOLD WAS
SOMETHING
LIKE 20
KAN!*



BUT HE WAS
TOO BUSY
RUNNING AND
GOT CAUGHT
BEFORE HE
COULD TELL
ANYONE
ABOUT WHERE
HE HID IT.

WHILE
FLEEING
FROM THE
POLICE, THE
MAN HID
THE GOLD
SOMEWHERE
IN HOKKAIDO.



THEY
THREW
HIM INTO
ABASHIRI
PRISON.

THEY
SENTENCED
HIM TO
DEATH AND
SENT HIM
AWAY TO
THE ENDS
OF THE
EARTH.



EVERYONE
WANTED TO
KNOW WHERE
HE'D HIDDEN
THE GOLD.

THE
GUARDS
WOULD
TAKE IT
AWAY,
AFTER
ALL.

BUT HE
COULDN'T
WRITE
THEM A
LETTER.

HE TRIED
TO,
SOMEHOW
TELL THEM
ABOUT THE
GOLD.

APPAR-
ENTLY,
HE HAD
FRIENDS
ON THE
OUTSIDE.



A man with a beard and mustache is shown in profile, drinking from a dark bottle. He is looking upwards with a contemplative expression.

THEY
CHECKED
PRISONERS
ABOUT TO BE
RELEASED,
RIGHT DOWN
TO THEIR
ASSHOLES.

THE
GUARDS
WOULD BE
WAITING
FOR HIM
TO DO
THAT.

HE
COULDN'T
SECRETLY
PASS THE
INFO ON
TO SOME
PRISONER
WHO WAS
ABOUT
TO BE SET
FREE.

A large, detailed close-up of a man's face. He has a beard and a wide-eyed, intense expression. A speech bubble is coming from him.

...GET A
MESSAGE
OUT OF
JAPAN'S
MOST
SECURE
PRISON?
HOW
WOULD
YOU
TELL YOUR
FRIENDS
ON THE
OUTSIDE?

HOW
WOULD
YOU,
SUGIMOTO...
HOW
WOULD
YOU...

WHAT
WOULD
YOU DO IF
YOU WERE
THE GOLD
THIEF?

A guard in a dark uniform and cap is shown from the chest up. He is looking towards the left. A speech bubble is coming from him.

THE
GUARDS
TRIED
EVERYTHING
TO MAKE HIM
REVEAL THE
LOCATION
OF THE
GOLD.

NOW,
ONE
GUARD
WAS
PARTICU-
LARLY
RUTH-
LESS.

HE
CUT THE
TENDON
IN ONE OF
THE GOLD
THIEF'S
LEGS
SO HE
COULDN'T
ESCAPE.

A small panel showing a close-up of a man's face, looking slightly to the side with a serious expression.

HURRY
UP AND
TELL ME.

I HAVE
NO IDEA.



THEY
TATTOOED
IT ONTO
THEIR
BODIES.

THOSE
BODIES
THAT
SHARED
THE
SAME
CELL...

...NOW
HAD THE
CODED
LOCATION
OF THE
GOLD
STASH
INKED
RIGHT
ONTO
THEM!

THEN
THE MAN
TOLD THE
PRISONERS...

THE
FINISHED
TATTOOS
FORMED A
CODE ONLY
THE THIEF'S
FRIENDS
COULD
UNDERSTAND.

THEN, BIT
BY BIT,
USING A
NEEDLE
THEY KEPT
HIDDEN
AWAY...

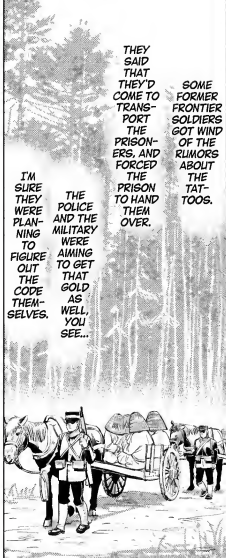
THEY
MIXED
IT WITH
SPIT TO
MAKE
THEIR
INK.

MAKING
CHARCOAL
WAS PART
OF THEIR
DAILY
LABOR, SO
GETTING
THEIR HANDS
ON SOME
CHARCOAL
WAS EASY.



"I'LL SPLIT
HALF THE
GOLD WITH
ANYONE
WHO
ESCAPES."

"BREAK
OUT OF
HERE."



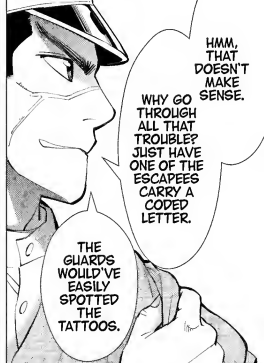
I'M SURE THEY WERE PLANNING TO FIGURE OUT THE CODE THEMSELVES.

THE POLICE AND THE MILITARY WERE AIMING TO GET THAT GOLD AS WELL, YOU SEE...

THEY SAID THAT THEY'D COME TO TRANSPORT THE PRISONERS, AND FORCED THE PRISON TO HAND THEM OVER.

SOME FORMER FRONTIER SOLDIERS GOT WIND OF THE RUMORS ABOUT THE TATTOOS.

THE TATTOOS ON ALL THE PRISONERS ONLY MAKE SENSE WHEN YOU COMBINE THEM.



HMM, THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

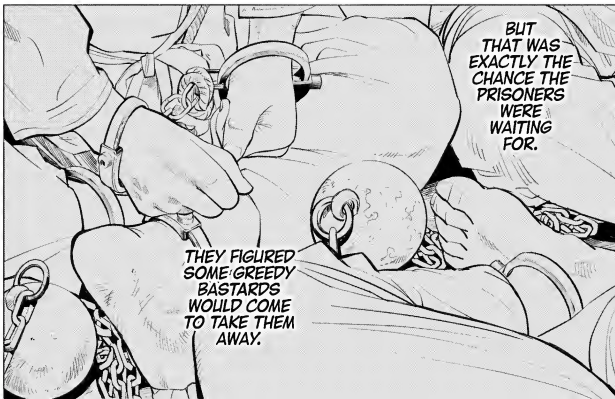
WHY GO THROUGH ALL THAT TROUBLE? JUST HAVE ONE OF THE ESCAPEES CARRY A CODED LETTER.

THE GUARDS WOULD'VE EASILY SPOTTED THE TATTOOS.



YOU'D THINK SO, RIGHT?

ONLY LATER DID THEY UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE TATTOOS.



BUT THAT WAS EXACTLY THE CHANCE THE PRISONERS WERE WAITING FOR.

THEY FIGURED SOME GREEDY BASTARDS WOULD COME TO TAKE THEM AWAY.

...AND
VANISHED
INTO THE
WOODS.

SO WHILE
THEY WERE
ON THE
ROAD, THE
PRISONERS
KILLED
THEIR
GUARDS...







YEAH...



DON'T
YOU
THINK
SO,
SAICHI?

IT
WOULD
BE AWFUL
NOT TO
BE ABLE
TO SEE
YOUR
CHILD
GROW UP.

HER
EYESIGHT
IS
GETTING
WORSE
EVERY
DAY.

I
WANT
A GOOD
DOCTOR
TO LOOK
AT MY
WIFE.



I RECKON
THE SHIP
PASSAGE
AND THE
OPERATION
WOULD COST
ABOUT
200 YEN.*

TAKE A
LOOK. I'VE
DONE THE
MATH.

HE SAID
THAT
AMERICA
HAS THE
BEST EYE
DOCTORS
IN THE
WORLD.

I HEARD
FROM AN
AMERICAN
FRIEND
WHO
WORKS
IN THE
RAILROAD
INDUSTRY.

IF I GO
WITH HER,
THE SHIP
PASSAGE
WOULD
DOUBLE.

*ABOUT 20 MILLION YEN IN MODERN CURRENCY.



WHAT DO
YOU MEAN?
AREN'T WE ON
GOOD TERMS
WITH THE
AMERICANS?

SO I
HAVE
TO
HURRY!

WHEN
THIS WAR
ENDS, THE
JAPANESE
AND
AMERICAN
RELATIONSHIP
WILL GET
WORSE.



BUT
FINDING
SOME
GOLD
WOULD
SOLVE ALL
THOSE
PROBLEMS
IN AN
INSTANT.



SAICHI.

NO ONE
IS GOING
TO WANT
TO MARRY
A WOMAN
WITH BAD
EYES AND
A KID.

TAKE
CARE OF
UMEKO
FOR ME.

AS YOUR
CHILD-
HOOD
FRIEND,
I'M
BEGGING
YOU.



HUH?

TORAJI,
WHAT
THE
HELL
ARE
YOU...







GRAB



...



...IF I'M
REALLY
IMMORTAL?

WANNA
FIND
OUT...



Gulp

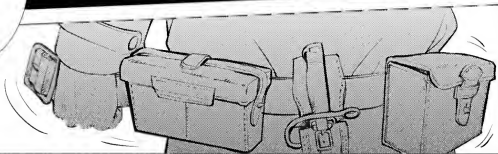


I SAID
TOO
MUCH.





SO HE GOT
DRUNK AND
RAN HIS
MOUTH TOO
MUCH, THEN
REALIZED
WHAT
HE DID
AND GOT
SCARED?



SUDDENLY
IT'S STARTING
TO SOUND
A LOT LESS
CRAZY.

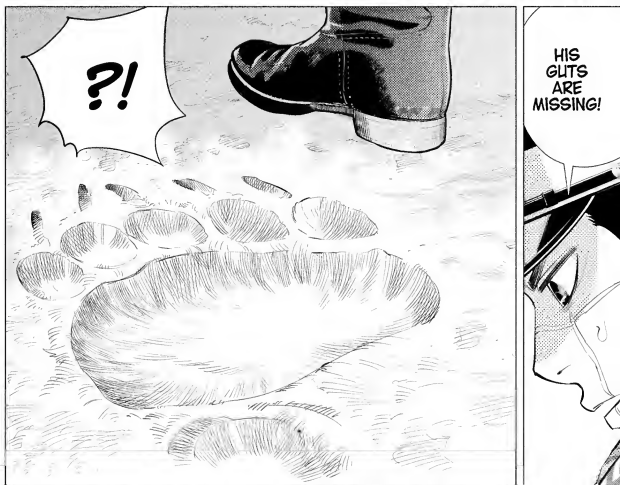
MAYBE HE
KNOWS
SOMETHING
MORE!

WELL
THEN...

WHAT
ABOUT
THAT
CRAZY
STORY HE
TOLD ME?

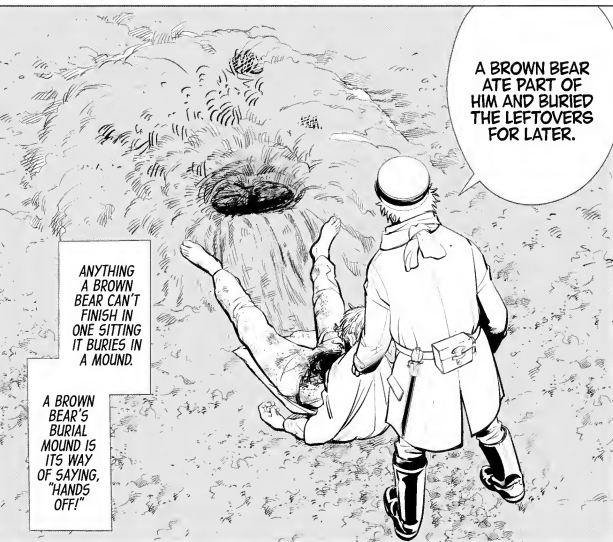








IT'S A
BROWN
BEAR!



A BROWN BEAR
ATE PART OF
HIM AND BURIED
THE LEFTOVERS
FOR LATER.

ANYTHING
A BROWN
BEAR CAN'T
FINISH IN
ONE SITTING
IT BURIES IN
A MOUND.

A BROWN
BEAR'S
BURIAL
MOUND IS
ITS WAY
OF SAYING,
"HANDS
OFF!"



WHAT
THE
HELL IS
THIS...

WHOA.

WHOA,
WHOA.
WHOA.



HUH?



IT KILLED
HIM
BEFORE
HE COULD
EVEN
SCREAM.

LOOKS
LIKE IT
BROKE
HIS
NECK.

YOU'RE
REALLY
UNLUCKY
TO HAVE
RUN INTO
A BROWN
BEAR LIKE
THAT.



NO
WONDER
THIS OLD
GEEZER
KNEW SO
MUCH!

SO IT
WASN'T
JUST
A TALL
TALE.



THIS
HAS TO
BE ONE
OF THE
TATTOOS
THAT
POINTS
TO THE
GOLD!

UNBELIEV-
ABLE!



HE WAS
ONE OF THE
PRISONERS
FROM THE
STORY?!







THERE IS
EVEN AN
ACCOUNT
OF A
BROWN
BEAR
KEEPING
PACE WITH
A TRUCK
MOVING AT
60 KPH.

BROWN
BEARS
POSSESS A
FRIGHTENING
AMOUNT
OF POWER,
ENDURANCE
AND SPEED.
THEY ARE
CAPABLE OF
CHASING
DOWN AND
KILLING
DEER.



THWMP



GRAAAH













...THAT
MEANS
THERE WAS
ANOTHER
BEAR AROUND
AND THE
MOTHER WAS
GETTING
IT TO
SAFETY.

IF
THE CUB
LEFT ITS
DEN AND
CLIMBED
A TREE...



SO DID
ANOTHER
BEAR EAT
THIS GUY?



JUST AS I
THOUGHT.

HER
STOMACH
IS EMPTY.



WHY?

FOR
YOU.

THIS IS
BAD.



I GUESS
I'LL TAKE
HIM TO A
NEARBY
VILLAGE...

WELL...

WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO DO WITH
THAT MAN'S
CORPSE?



BEARS
DON'T
GIVE UP
ON PREY
THEY'VE
TASTED.

THE
MATAKARIP
WAS
EATING HIM.

DON'T
BOTHER.



THE ONLY
BEARS THAT
EAT MEAT
AROUND
THIS
TIME OF
YEAR ARE
MATAKARIP.

MATAKARIP
MEANS
"ONES
THAT
WANDER
IN THE
WINTER."

BEARS THAT
MISSED THE
HIBERNATION
PERIOD
ARE VERY
AGGRESSIVE.



I'M TAKING
THE
CORPSE
WITH ME.
I CAN'T
LEAVE IT
BEHIND!

I CAN'T
DO THAT.



YOU'LL
ONLY LEAD
A FRENZIED
BEAR INTO A
VILLAGE.

THEY'LL
TRACK IT
DOWN NO
MATTER
WHERE
IT IS.

IF
SOMEONE
STEALS
THEIR PREY...

THE
CORPSE
MUST
STAY
WHERE
YOU
FOUND
IT.



THEN YOU'LL
HAVE TO
SHOOT THE
MATAKARIP
BY
YOURSELF.

AREN'T
YOU A
SOLDIER?
FIGHT LIKE
ONE.



IS HE
FAMILY? A
FRIEND?

?

IS HE THAT
IMPORTANT
TO YOU?



NOT SO
MUCH...

NO ...



**THE
WEAK
ONLY
GET
EATEN.**



...

**I FOUGHT
RUSSIANS
ON THE
BATTLEFIELD.**

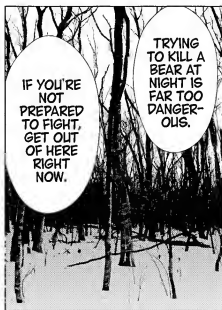
**NOT A
FRENZIED
MONSTER
BEAR!**



**THE
MOON
WON'T
BE OUT
TONIGHT.**

**IT'S
GOING
TO
GET
VERY
DARK
SOON.**

**BUT THE
BEAR
CAN SEE
JUST
FINE.**



**IF YOU'RE
NOT
PREPARED
TO FIGHT,
GET OUT
OF HERE
RIGHT
NOW.**

**TRYING
TO KILL A
BEAR AT
NIGHT IS
FAR TOO
DANGEROUS.**

HAVE I
GOT AN
INTERESTING
STORY TO
TELL YOU.









REALLY?



I BELIEVE
YOU.

I DIDN'T
BELIEVE
THE
STORY
AT FIRST,
EITHER,
BUT...

YEAH,
YEAH...



...



YES. MY
FATHER
WAS ONE
OF THE AINU
MURDERED
THAT NIGHT.





...



IN THAT
CASE,
LET'S
MOVE THE
CORPSE
A BIT
CLOSER TO
THE FIRE.



SO
THAT'S
WHAT
IT WAS!



WAIT A
SECOND.
HIS
TATTOO...



THAT MAN
NEVER
INTENDED
TO SPLIT
THE GOLD
WITH THE
PRISONERS.

THEY
HAD NO
IDEA...



HOW
CRUEL...

WHAT
IS IT?



AND THE
TATTOO
STOPS
AT THE
MEDIAN
LINES OF
HIS BODY.



WHAT
DO
YOU
MEAN?



THIS
TATTOO
WRAPS
AROUND
HIS
CHEST
AND
ARMS.

LOOK.



IT'S THE
SAME
WAY YOU
WOULD
MARK
OTHER
ANIMALS...

...TO
STRIP
THEIR
HIDE.

HOW
DESPERATE
IS HE
TO KEEP
HIS GOLD
HIDDEN?

WHO
WAS THE
MAN THAT
TATTOOED
THOSE
PRISONERS?



SO WHY
DON'T
WE JUST
SKIN HIM
BEFORE
THE
BEAR
COMES?

IT'S
NOT
COMING
AFTER
THE
SKIN
TOO,
RIGHT?

NO, WE
DON'T
HAVE
THE
TIME.

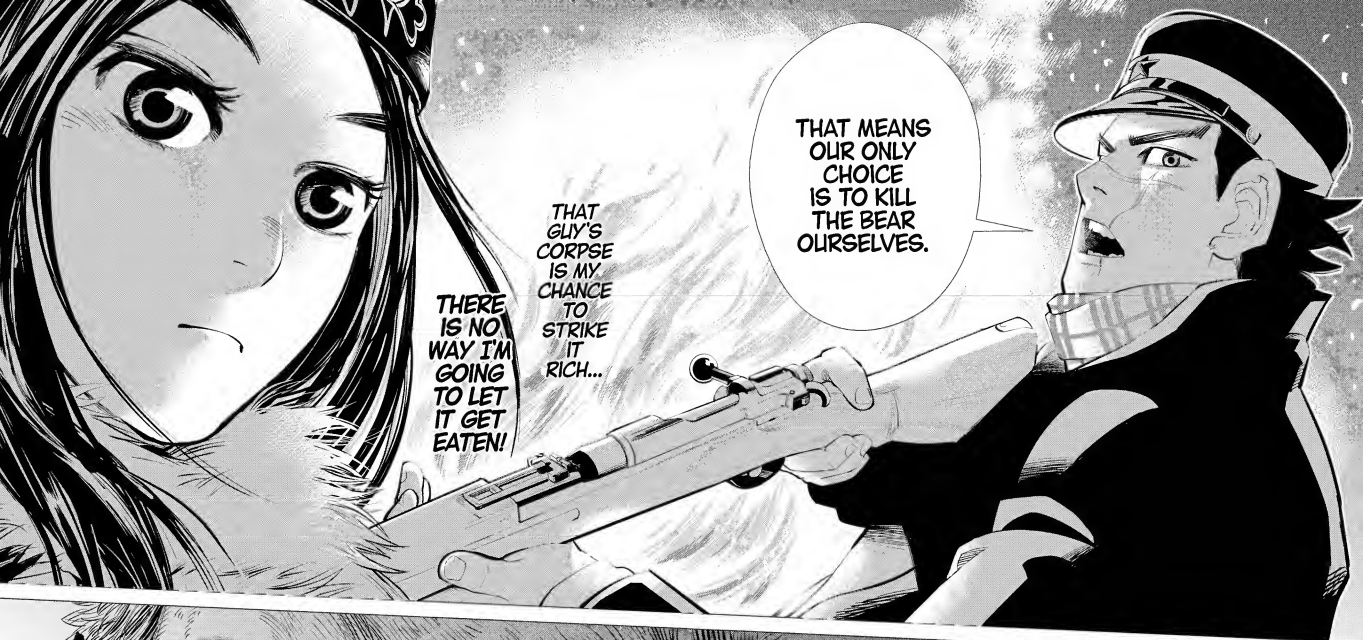
BROWN
BEARS
DON'T
WANDER
FAR FROM
THEIR
PREY. IT'S
CLOSE
BY, ALL
RIGHT.

WE
SHOULD
HURRY
AND
GATHER
FIRE-
WOOD.

IS
THAT WHY
HE WAS
TATTOOED
LIKE THIS?

SO YOU'RE
SAYING...
THE PLAN
ALL ALONG
WAS TO
KILL AND
SKIN HIM?







THE BLAKISTON LINE

A ZOOGEOGRAPHICAL LINE. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANIMALS IN HOKKAIDO AND HONSHU ISLANDS ARE SO GREAT THAT YOU COULD CLAIM THAT HOKKAIDO ISN'T EVEN PART OF JAPAN.

THE BEARS, DEER, SQUIRRELS, FOXES, HARES AND OTHER ANIMALS THAT INHABIT HOKKAIDO ARE COMPARATIVELY LARGER THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS ON THE HONSHU ISLANDS.

ACCORDING TO BERGMANN'S RULE, LARGER SPECIES OF ANIMALS ARE FOUND IN COLDER ENVIRONMENTS.

THE HOKKAIDO BROWN BEAR AND HOKKAIDO WOLF ARE NOTICEABLY LARGER THAN THE ASIAN BLACK BEAR AND JAPANESE WOLF.

INCIDENTALLY, THERE ARE NO MONKEYS OR BOARS IN HOKKAIDO.

Saichi Sugimoto's Equipment

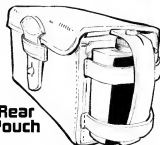


Type 30 round
6.5x50mm semi-rimmed Arisaka round, stored in clips



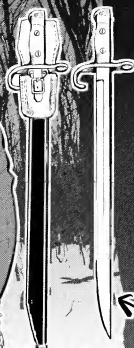
Front Pouch

Ammunition Pouch



Rear Pouch

Oil Can
Oil for rifle maintenance

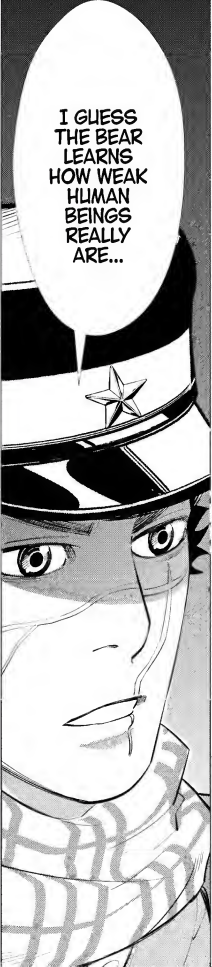


Type 30 Bayonet



Type 30 Rifle
holds 5 rounds

Chapter 2: Wenkamuy



I GUESS
THE BEAR
LEARNS
HOW WEAK
HUMAN
BEINGS
REALLY
ARE...



WHEN A
BROWN
BEAR KILLS
A HUMAN...

...ITS
PUNISHMENT
IS TO NEVER
BE ABLE
TO EAT
ANYTHING
ELSE AGAIN.

EVEN
THOUGH THE
MOUNTAINS
ARE FULL OF
DELICIOUS
CHESTNUTS,
HARDY KIWIS,
GRAPES AND
HONEY.

IT
BECOMES A
WENKAMUJI,
AN EVIL GOD.

IT NO LONGER
FEARS HUMANS
AND TURNS
VIOLENT AND
DANGEROUS.

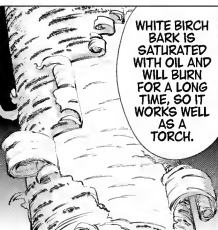




GATHER
SOME
SITAT!

GATHER
WHAT?

BARK
FROM
THE
WHITE
BIRCH
TREES.



WHITE BIRCH
BARK IS
SATURATED
WITH OIL AND
WILL BURN
FOR A LONG
TIME, SO IT
WORKS WELL
AS A
TORCH.



GO AND
GET SOME
FIREWOOD.

WE
CAN'T
FIGHT
IN THE
DARK!

DON'T
LET THE
CAMPFIRE
BURN OUT
TONIGHT.

THAT
BEAR IS
DEFINITELY
COMING.

WHEN DAWN
BREAKS AND
THE SUN
COMES UP, WE
WON'T BE AT A
DISADVANTAGE.

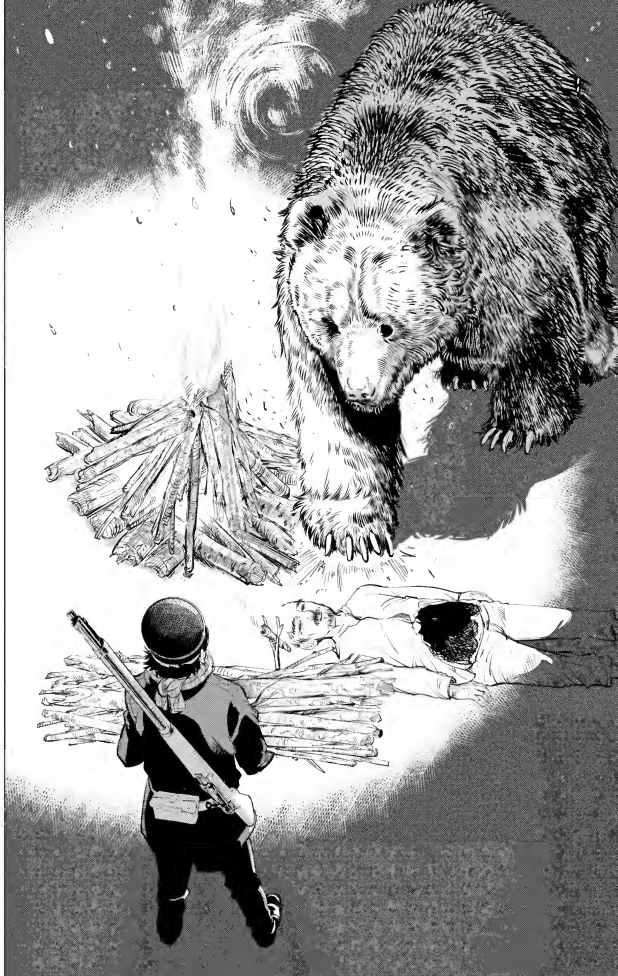


IT'S GOING
TO BE A
TEST OF
ENDURANCE.

SUNRISE
ISN'T FOR
ANOTHER
TWELVE
HOURS.

WE'RE
GOING TO
NEED A
LOT MORE
FIREWOOD.









OF COURSE
THAT WAS
USELESS.



GLARE



I
GUESS
IT GOT
HIM...

...

THAK

GAH!

SNAP
CRACK

GET
UNDER IT!
GRAB ON
TO ITS
BELLY!



I NEED
TO BE
ABSOLUTELY
SURE I
DON'T MISS.

EVEN IF I
DON'T HIT
A VITAL
AREA, THE
BEAR WILL
EVENTUALLY
DIE AS LONG
AS THE
POISON GETS
INTO ITS
BODY.

IT'S SO
DARK I
CAN'T SEE
ANYTHING,
BUT I HAVE
A ROUGH
FEELING FOR
WHERE THE
BEAR IS.



BROWN
BEARS ARE
SO FAST
IT'LL BE ON
ME BEFORE I
CAN READY
MY NEXT
ARROW.

I'LL USE
THIS TREE
AS A SHIELD
IN CASE IT
CHARGES.



**DON'T
SHOOT!
YOU'LL
HIT ME!**



VWOH

**GRRUFF
KRUFF**

**WAIT! LET
ME TRY
SOMETHING!**

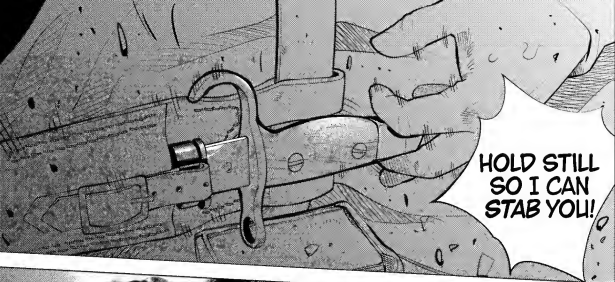


**THAT
SISAM*
IS STILL
ALIVE?**

*THE AINU TERM FOR NON-AINU JAPANESE PEOPLE.



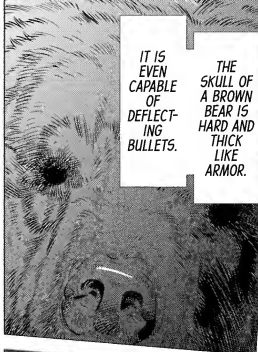
**I'VE ONLY
GOT ONE
SHOT!**



KING

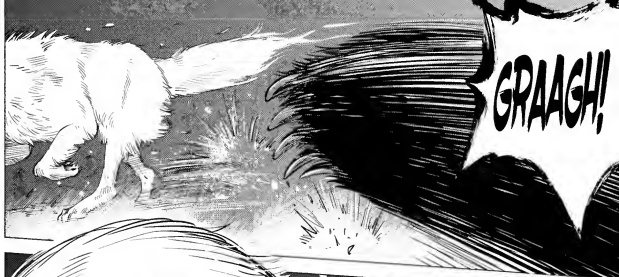














RETAR!



ITS
HEART
IS RIGHT
BELOW
THE
ARMPIT.

FROM
YOUR
POSITION...

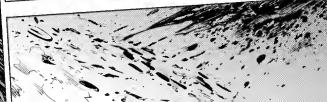
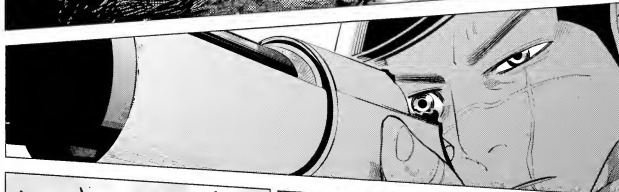
BE
CAREFUL
WHERE YOU
STRIKE.
WATCH OUT
FOR THE
SHOULDER
BLADE.



GRRRAA!
GRR!

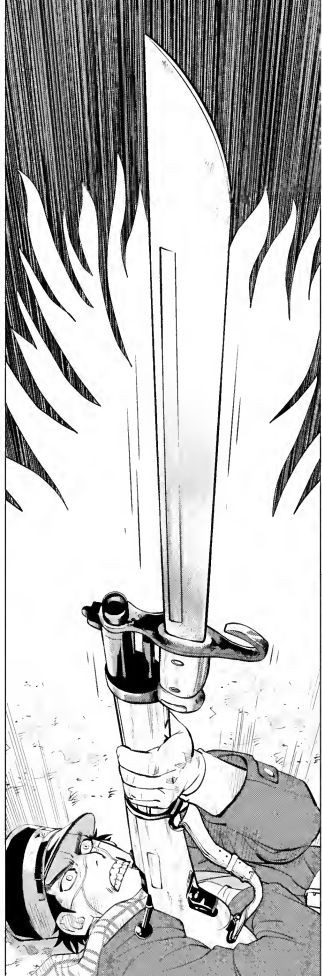
GROWL
!!





TRY TO
KILL ME,
DAMMIT!
I'M
IMMORTAL
SLIGIMOTO
!







...HEY!

ARE YOU
STILL
ALIVE,
SISAM?



WELL,
WELL,
LOOKS
LIKE I
SURVIVED
AGAIN.

I'M
ALIVE.



ACTUALLY,
WOULD YOU
HELP PULL
ME OUT?

I DIDN'T!

I JUST
REACTED
INSTINCTIVELY.



YOU'RE
COURAGEOUS
AND SEEM TO
KNOW HOW
TO FIGHT.

NOT BAD,
FOR A
SISAM.

YOU'RE
SUCH A
TALENTED
FIGHTER!



...AINU
HUNTERS
PLANT
SHARPENED
STAKES INTO
THE GROUND.
THEY USE
THE WEIGHT
OF THE
FALLING BEAR
TO PIERCE IT
THROUGH
THE HEART.

TO
KILL
BEARS
...

IT'S AN
EXTREMELY
DANGEROUS
TECHNIQUE,
AND YOU
MUST BE
WILLING TO
SACRIFICE
YOURSELF
FOR IT.

I'M
SURPRISED
YOU KNEW
IT.



**I'M
ASIRPA.**



**I'M SAICHI
SLIGIMOTO.**



IT'S OVER THERE.

WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT ANYWAY?

WHERE DID THAT BIG WHITE DOG GO?

IT ALMOST LOOKED LIKE IT WAS PROTECTING YOU...



AND IT'S A WOLF.



MOST
HOKKAIDO WOLVES
(ALSO KNOWN AS
EZO WOLVES)
HAD BEEN
EXTERMINATED BY
THE 1890s, AND
WERE BELIEVED TO
BE EXTINCT.



A WOLF?

I THOUGHT THEY'D ALL DIED OUT...



THEY WERE
HACKED
TO PIECES.
ANIMALS GOT
TO THEIR
CORPSES
AND
SCATTERED
THEIR
REMAINS.

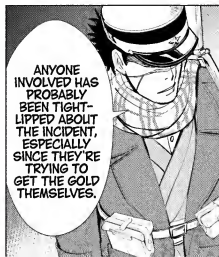
MY FATHER
AND SIX
OTHER MEN
FROM THE
VILLAGE WERE
KILLED WHILE
MOVING THEIR
GOLD STASH
TO A NEW
HIDING PLACE.

FIVE
YEARS
AGO...

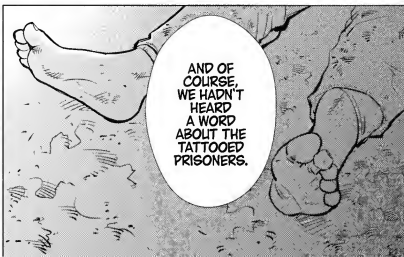


THEY NEVER
TOLD US
THAT THE
MURDERER
HAD BEEN
CAUGHT
AND
THROWN
INTO
ABASHIRI
PRISON.

AND ONE OF
THE PIECES
OF FLESH
RESEMBLED
MY
FATHER...



ANYONE
INVOLVED HAS
PROBABLY
BEEN TIGHT-
LIPPED ABOUT
THE INCIDENT,
ESPECIALLY
SINCE THEY'RE
TRYING TO
GET THE GOLD
THEMSELVES.



AND OF
COURSE,
WE HADN'T
HEARD
A WORD
ABOUT THE
TATTOOED
PRISONERS.



ALL I'M
LOOKING
FOR IS
A SMALL
SHARE.

IT
BELONGS
TO YOUR
PEOPLE
IN THE
FIRST
PLACE,
SO I
WON'T
EVEN
ASK FOR
FIFTY-
FIFTY.

LET'S
TEAM UP
AND FIND
THIS
GOLD
TOGETHER.

LISTEN,
ASIRPA.



WHOEVER
TATTOOED
THESE MEN
MEANT FOR
THEM TO BE
KILLED AND
SKINNED...

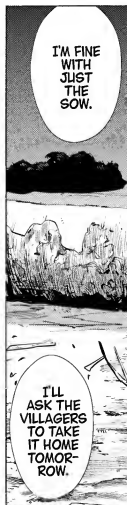


FIND THE
GOLD?
AND HOW
WILL
WE DO
THAT?



AND
THEN
WHAT
WOULD
YOU
HAVE
US DO?

TRACK
DOWN
ALL THE
PRISONERS
WITH THE
TATTOOS?



THEN I
GUESS
THEY'LL
RESERVE
A SPECIAL
PLACE
FOR ME!



KILLING
PEOPLE
SENDS
YOU TO
HELL,
EH?





THE
PEOPLE IN
CHARGE
WON'T
WANT TO
EXECUTE
HIM UNTIL
THEY FIND
THE GOLD.

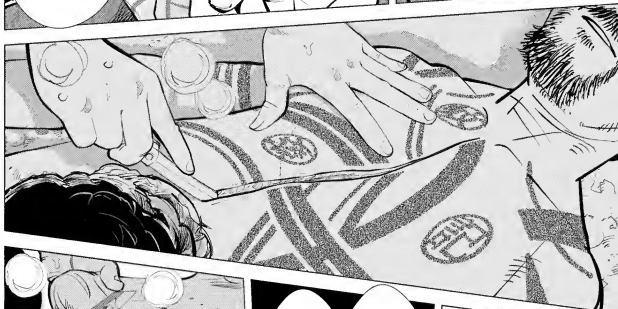
...IS STILL
PROBABLY
ALIVE IN
PRISON!

THE
MAN
WHO
KILLED
YOUR
FATHER
...

ASIRPA
...

...MEANS
THAT
ODDS
ARE
THEY
HAVEN'T
FOUND
THE
GOLD
YET.

THE
FACT
THAT
THIS
GUY WAS
STILL
LIVING IN
HIDING...



...HE'S A
DEAD MAN.

BUT THE
MOMENT
SOMEBODY
FINDS THE
HIDDEN
STASH...





ASIRPA...

YOU KNEW
THAT, AND
THAT'S
WHY YOU
DECIDED
TO HELP
ME FIGHT
THE BEAR.
ISN'T THAT
RIGHT?

...ALSO
MEANS
GETTING
REVENGE
FOR YOUR
FATHER.

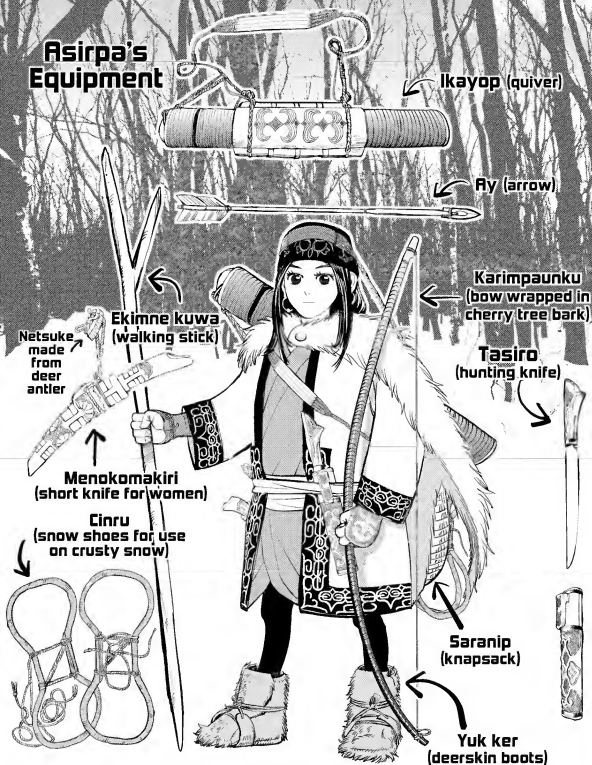
FINDING
THE
GOLD...

I'LL BE
THE ONE
GETTING
MY HANDS
DIRTY.

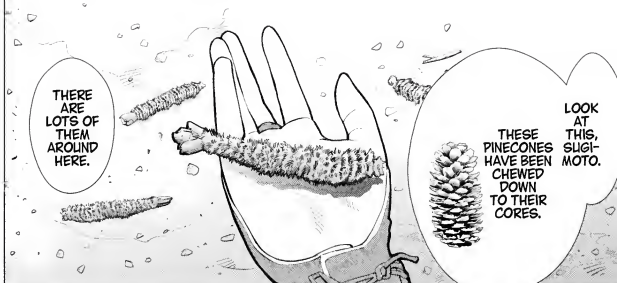
ALL YOU
NEED TO DO
IS SHARE
YOUR
KNOWLEDGE
WITH ME.

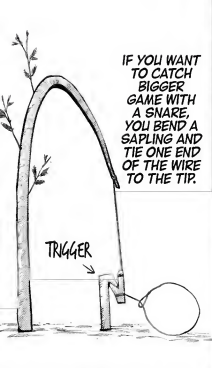


Asirpa's Equipment



Chapter 3: Trap







HOKKAIDO
IS A BIG
PLACE.



...I DON'T
THINK
THEY
WOULD
HAVE
RUN TO
THE
MAIN-
LAND.

IF THOSE
ESCAPED
PRISONERS
ARE STILL
SEARCHING
FOR THE
GOLD...

THEY MUST
STILL BE
SOMEWHERE
IN HOKKAIDO.

WE'LL FIND
THEM,
WHATEVER
IT TAKES.



I THINK
THEY'D
TRY TO
BLEND
INTO THE
CROWD IN
A BIG CITY.

AN
OUTSIDER
WOULD
IMMEDIATELY
STAND OUT,
ESPECIALLY
IN A SMALL
VILLAGE.



THEY
CAN'T
SURVIVE
BY
HIDING
UP IN THE
MOUN-
TAINS.

BUT THEY'RE
CON-
VICTS,
NOT WILD
ANIMALS.

THAT
GUY WHO
GOT HIMSELF
KILLED BY
THE BEAR
WOULD
COME INTO
TOWN AND
GET DRUNK
EVERY TIME
HE FOUND
A BIT OF
GOLD.

AND
ASAHI-
KAWA...

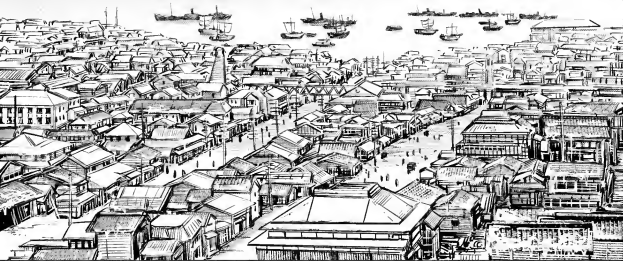
SAPPORO.

HAKODATE.

THE MOST
POPULATED
CITIES IN
HOKKAIDO
ARE...

AND
THIS
TOWN.

OTARU.



ALL
RIGHT
THEN...

HOW
ARE WE
GOING TO
FIND THOSE
TATTOOS?
THE MAN
WHO GOT
EATEN
MANAGED
TO STAY
IN HIDING
FOR A
LONG TIME,
RIGHT?

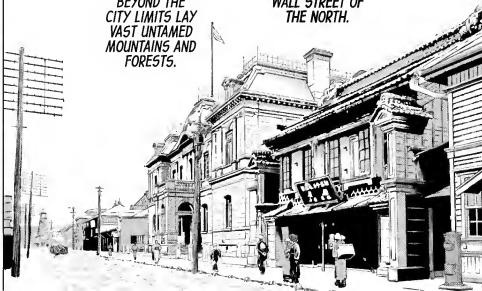


THERE WERE
ALSO AINU
SETTLEMENTS
NEARBY.

OTARU WAS
THE LARGEST
COMMERCIAL
CENTER IN
HOKKAIDO, BUT
BEYOND THE
CITY LIMITS LAY
VAST UNTAMED
MOUNTAINS AND
FORESTS.

HAVING DEVELOPED
INTO A MAJOR PORT,
OTARU HAD BECOME
A FINANCIAL HUB
KNOWN AS THE
WALL STREET OF
THE NORTH.

THE FINAL
DAYS OF
THE MEIJI
ERA.





*WOMEN'S BATH

*MEN'S BATH





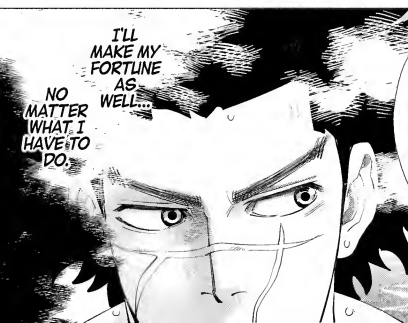
IT'S THANKS
TO SOLDIERS
LIKE YOU THAT
WE WERE ABLE
TO TAKE BACK
SOUTHERN
KARAFUTO.

THANKS
TO YOU,
THIS
PORT
TOWN
WILL
CONTINUE
TO PROSPER.

THANK
YOU
FOR
ALL
YOU'VE
DONE.



IT'S
AMAZING
YOU'RE
STILL
ALIVE.



NO
MATTER
WHAT I
HAVE TO
DO,

I'LL
MAKE MY
FORTUNE
AS
WELL...



THE
MERCHANTS
ARE THE
ONLY ONES
GETTING
RICH.

...







SO I'D
BETTER
HURRY
AND SELL
YOU OFF
NOW!

NO ONE
WANTS A
GIRL WITH
A MOUTH
TATTOO...

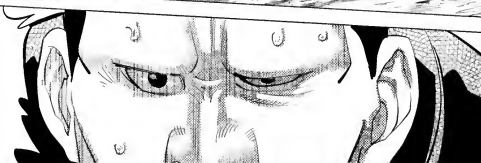
HUP



AH HA
HA! YOU
SHOW
HIM,
LITTLE
GIRL!

OWW!

**YOU
FLICKIN'
BRAT!**







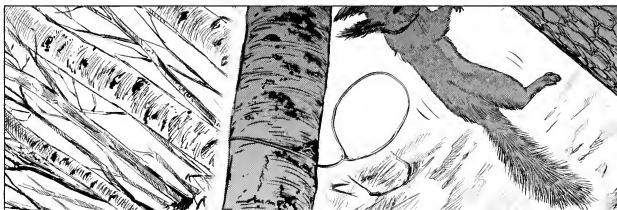




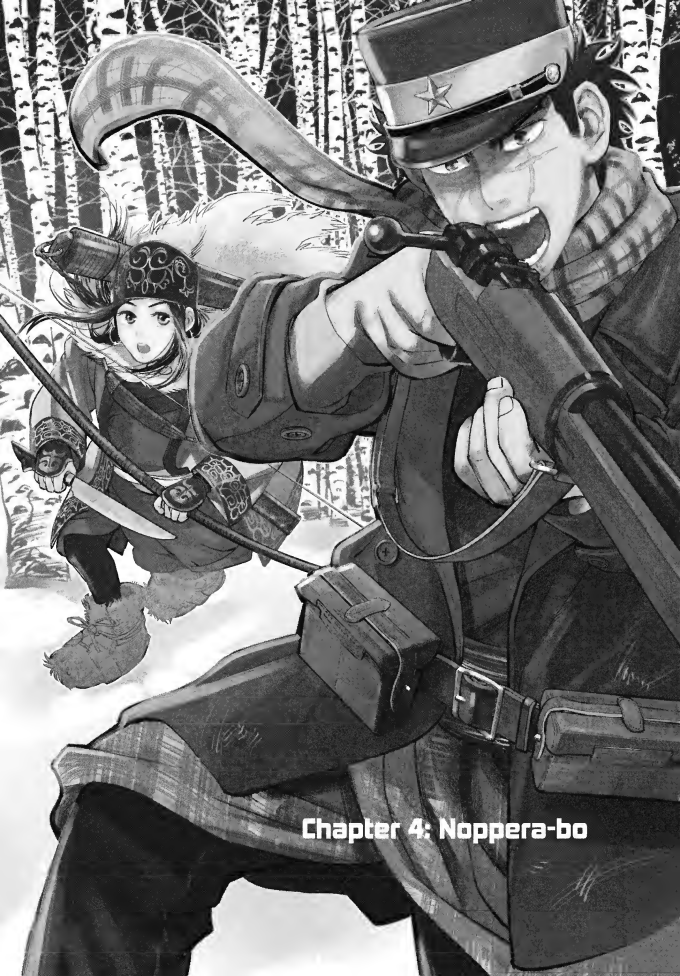












Chapter 4: Noppera-bo





WHY DID YOU ALL SPLIT UP?



I THOUGHT SO TOO...

...AT FIRST.



I KNOW THOSE TATTOOS ARE MEANINGLESS ON THEIR OWN.

THEY'RE PRACTICALLY WORTHLESS IF YOU GUYS AREN'T TOGETHER.

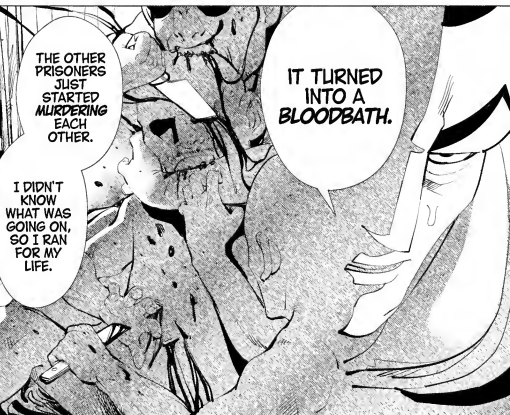
DON'T LIE TO ME.



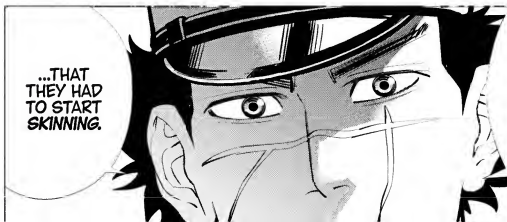
THE OTHER PRISONERS JUST STARTED MURDERING EACH OTHER.

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON, SO I RAN FOR MY LIFE.

I COULDN'T TRUST ANYONE, SO I'VE BEEN LAYING LOW ALL THIS TIME.



IT TURNED INTO A BLOODBATH.



...THAT THEY HAD TO START SKINNING.

I SEE. THAT MEANS SOME PRISONERS MUST HAVE REALIZED...

...
MONSTER.

THE GUY
WHO
CAME UP
WITH THE
ESCAPE
PLAN
WAS A
COLD AND
BRUTAL...

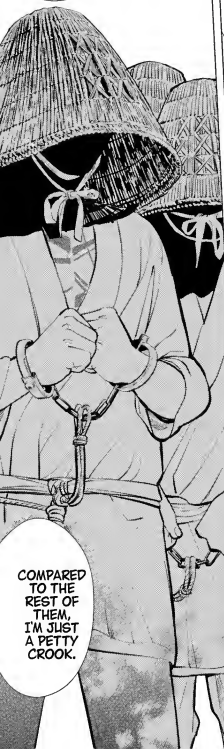
SO,
WHAT?
ARE THEY
GOING
TO HUNT
DOWN
EVERY
SINGLE
ONE OF
US, ONE
BY ONE?



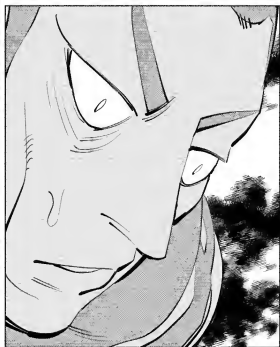
WHAT?
SKINNING?

OH, SO
YOU
DIDN'T
FIGURE IT
OUT?

THE WHOLE
PURPOSE OF
THAT TATTOO
WAS SO THAT
ONE DAY YOU
COULD BE
KILLED AND
HAVE YOUR
SKIN PEELED
OFF.



COMPARED
TO THE
REST OF
THEM,
I'M JUST
A PETTY
CROOK.



HEH...
HEH!

WHAT A
CRUEL
PLAN...





I WISH
YOU
COULDA
SEEN HOW
THEY DIED.

THOSE
GREEDY
YOUNG
SOLDIERS
WHO CAME
TO GET
US...



IS
THAT
ALL
YOU'VE
GOT TO
SAY?

DON'T
WORRY.

YOU WON'T
FEEL A
THING WHEN
I SKIN YOU,
BECAUSE
YOU'LL BE
DEAD.



LISTEN,
MAN. YOU'D
BE SAFER
CHASING
RABBITS.



YOU
PROMISED
NOT TO
KILL
ANYONE!

HEY!
SUGI-
MOTO!



IF YOU KILL
HIM, OUR
DEAL IS
OFF!



HUH?



THERE
GOES MY
PLAN TO
SCARE
HIM INTO
TALKING.

SCRITCH
SCRITCH

ASIRPA,
I WAS
HOPING
YOU'D
PLAY
ALONG.



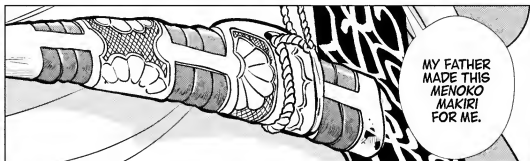


SHE
INSPECTS
THE
CRAFTS-
MANSHIP
AND DECIDES
WHETHER THE
MAN WILL BE
A GOOD
PROVIDER.

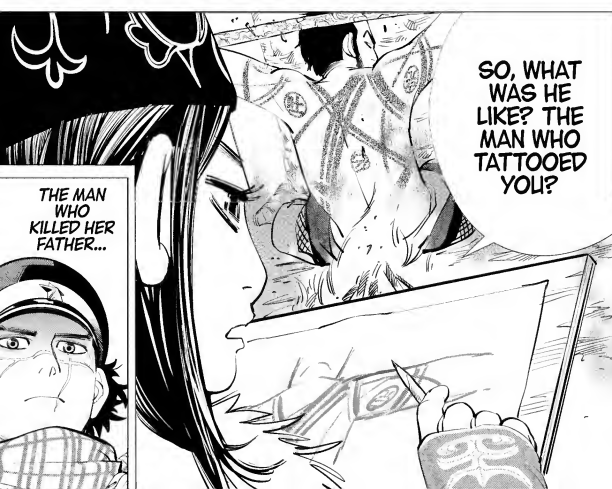
AINU MEN
MAKE A
MAKIRI,
A SHORT
SWORD, AND
GIVE IT TO
THE WOMAN
THEY LIKE.

MY
FATHER
WAS
GOOD
WITH HIS
HANDS.

SO HE
WAS
PRETTY
POPULAR
WITH THE
LADIES.



THE MAN
WHO
KILLED HER
FATHER...



SO, WHAT
WAS HE
LIKE? THE
MAN WHO
TATTOOED
YOU?



THAT'S
WHAT WE
CALLED
HIM.

NOPPERA-BO.



HE
DIDN'T
HAVE A
FACE.



WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN BY
THAT?



FROM THE TIME LAG
BETWEEN THE BULLET
STRIKING ITS MARK AND
THE SOUND OF THE
GUNSHOT, SUGIMOTO
CALCULATED THE
SHOT WAS FIRED
FROM 200 KAN
(300 METERS) AWAY.

BANG



WHO DID
THAT?
THIS GUY
WASN'T
ALONE?



SOUNDS
LIKE HE'S
USING
A TYPE
26 OFF
A DEAD
SOLDIER.

BANG

BANG

BANG

BANG

TNK

ARE
THEY
BURNING
SOME
GREEN
WOOD?

GRIP

WFF

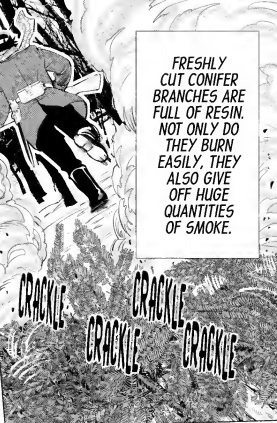
WFF

WFF

!



FRESHLY
CUT CONIFER
BRANCHES ARE
FULL OF RESIN.
NOT ONLY DO
THEY BURN
EASILY, THEY
ALSO GIVE
OFF HUGE
QUANTITIES
OF SMOKE.







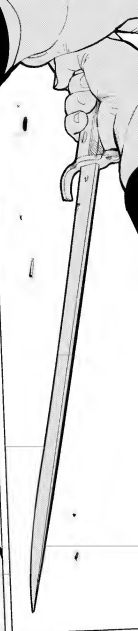
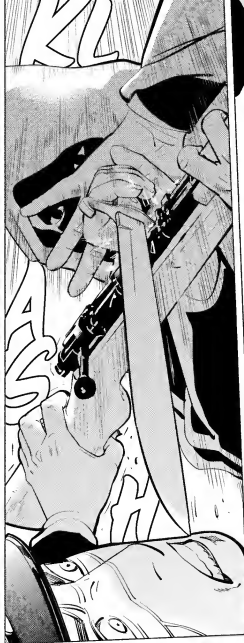
ONE
OF THE
BASIC
RULES OF
TRAPPING
IS THIS:

WHA
...?!



THE MORE
TRAPS YOU SET,
THE BETTER YOUR
CHANCES ARE OF
CATCHING PREY.
ASIRPA AND
SUGIMOTO SET
MANY TRAPS
AROUND THE
FOREST TO
CATCH PEOPLE
FOLLOWING THEM.







HUH?

SHIT!

THE MOMENT
THEY MOVED
AWAY FROM
EACH OTHER,
THE MAN DE-
PRESSED THE
BOLT STOP AND
PULLED OUT THE
BOLT, RENDERING
SUGIMOTO'S
RIFLE USELESS.





AND
FROM THE
REGIMENT
NUMBER
ON HIS
SHOULDER
BOARDS...

I KNEW
HE WAS A
SOLDIER.



THE
STRONGEST
UNIT IN THE
ARMY, THE
HOKKAIDO
7TH
DIVISION!

...HE'S
FROM
THE UNIT
THAT'S
CHASING
AFTER
THE
GOLD.



Chapter 5: Hokuchin Unit



THE PEOPLE
OF HOKKAIDO
HONOR THEM BY
CALLING THEM THE
**HOKUCHIN
UNIT.**

**THE 7TH DIVISION
OF THE IMPERIAL
JAPANESE ARMY!**

DURING THE
RUSSO-JAPANESE
WAR, THE 7TH
DIVISION WAS SENT
INTO THE WORST
SITUATIONS DURING
THE SIEGE OF PORT
ARTHUR AND THE
BATTLE OF MUKDEN.
DESPITE SUFFERING
HUGE LOSSES,
THEY WERE
INSTRUMENTAL
TO JAPANESE
VICTORY.

BEARING THE
RESPONSIBILITY
OF DEFENDING
NORTHERN JAPAN,
THEY ARE THE
STRONGEST
DIVISION IN THE
ARMY.

THOSE
PRISONERS
ARE BAD
ENOUGH. I
DON'T WANT
THESE ARMY
GUYS COMING
AFTER ME
TOO...

...EVEN
IF HE'S
JUST
PART OF A
BLINCH OF
RUFFIANS
IN THE
UNIT...



**IT'S FOR
THE
WOMAN
I LOVE.**



I WAS IN
THE 1ST
DIVISION
...

I
WAS DIS-
CHARGED
AT THE
END OF MY
SERVICE
THOUGH.

WHICH
OUTFIT
ARE YOU
FROM?



OH, IS
THAT SO?
THEN WE
MAY HAVE
SEEN EACH
OTHER AT
203 METER
HILL.



SCRITCH SCRITCH SCRITCH

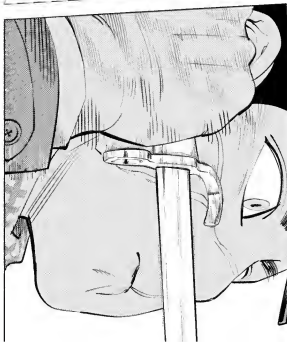
YOU
SHOULD
HAND
THAT
CORPSE
OVER TO
ME.

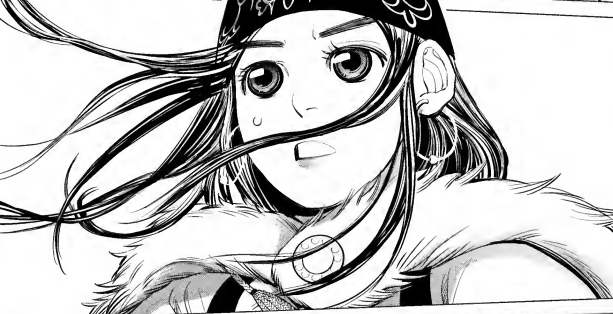
NO
AMOUNT OF
MONEY IS
WORTH THE
LIFE YOU'VE
SOMEHOW
HELD ON TO
THROUGH THE WAR.

YOU HAVE
NO IDEA
WHAT A
DANGEROUS
GAME
YOU'RE
PLAYING.

I'M NOT
IN IT
FOR THE
MONEY.









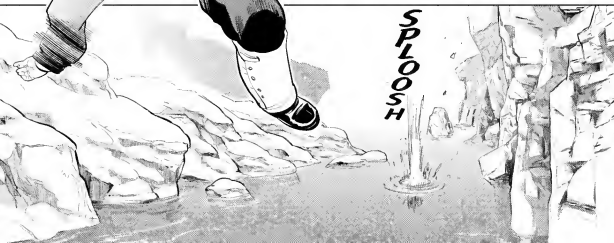
NO WAY I
CAN TAKE
IMMORTAL
SUGIMOTO
IN THIS
CONDITION.

NOT
WITH
ONE
ARM.

DANGLE

WHACK

HE'S
GOING
TO FALL!





THE
ONE WAY I
LEARNED TO
STAY ALIVE
DURING THE
WAR...

...WAS TO
NOT LET
ANYBODY
KILL ME.

"IMMORTAL
SLUGIMOTO."

WHAT
DOES IT
MEAN?



IF
WE HAD
LET HIM
ESCAPE,
HIS
BUDDIES
WOULD
HAVE
COME
AFTER
US.

IT
WAS
FOR
THE
BEST.



IF SOMEONE
TRIES TO
KILL ME,
I WON'T
HESITATE TO
KILL THEM.



ASIRPA,
I'M
NOT A
MURDER-
ER...

BUT...



THE
STRONG
FEAST
ON THE
WEAK.

ISN'T
THAT THE
UNIVERSAL
TRUTH?



I DON'T HAVE ANY BROTHERS, SO MY FATHER ALWAYS TOOK ME WITH HIM ON HIS HUNTING TRIPS.

MY FATHER.

ASIRPA, WHO TAUGHT YOU SO MUCH ABOUT HUNTING?

I'D RATHER BE IN THE MOUNTAINS THAN STAY AT HOME KNITTING.



OF COURSE, IT JUST MEANS WE'RE ALIVE. WHEN WE REACH A HUT... LET'S MAKE SOME FOOD.

I GUESS YOU CAN STILL GET HUNGRY AT A TIME LIKE THIS.

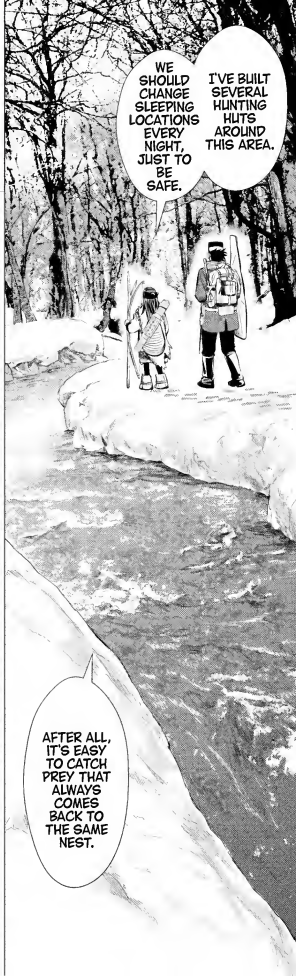
GRGL

GRGL



THE ROOF AND FLOOR ARE MADE FROM THE BRANCHES OF SAKHALIN FIR AND OTHER EVERGREEN TREES. UP TO FOUR ADULTS CAN FIT INSIDE.

A KUCA (TEMPORARY HUT) IS A CONE-SHAPED HUT USED FOR SHORT STAYS.



WE SHOULD CHANGE SLEEPING LOCATIONS EVERY NIGHT, JUST TO BE SAFE.

I'VE BUILT SEVERAL HUNTING HUTS AROUND THIS AREA.

AFTER ALL, IT'S EASY TO CATCH PREY THAT ALWAYS COMES BACK TO THE SAME NEST.



ARE YOU
GOING TO
ROAST
THEM?

LET'S
EAT THE
SQUIRRELS
WE'VE
CAUGHT
IN THE
SNARES.



SLIGIMOTO,
YOU CAN
HAVE THE
BRAIN.

WE CAN MAKE
CITATAP WITH
THE BRAIN,
BUT EATING
IT WHOLE IS
A DELICACY.

YOU'RE
GOING
TO EAT
THAT
RAW?

HUH?!



FIRST, WE
SKIN THE
SQUIRREL.

IF YOU CUT
OPEN THE
FUR, YOU
CAN PULL IT
OFF AS IF
YOU WERE
TAKING ITS
CLOTHES
OFF.



NEXT, WE
SQUEEZE
OUT THE
CONTENTS
OF THE
ORGANS AND
WASH THEM
THOROUGHLY.

THE GALL
BLADDER
IS TOO
BITTER, SO
WE SHOULD
REMOVE IT.



NO,
WE'RE
GOING
TO MAKE
CITATAP.

CITATAP
?

IT'S
AN AINU
DISH
WHERE
YOU MAKE
MINCE-
MEAT
USING A
KNIFE.





CITATAP,
CITATAP.

CITATAP,
CITATAP.

SAY
"CITATAP"
AS YOU
MINCE.

...WE ONLY
USE THE
FRESHEST
MEAT FOR
CITATAP.

SINCE
WE EAT
IT RAW...

TO K
TO K
TO K



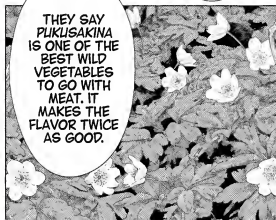
I'M TIRED,
SO IT'S
YOUR TURN,
SUGIMOTO.

"CITATAP"
MEANS
"WE MINCE
IT."

WE SAY CI
BECAUSE
WE TAKE
TURNS
MINCING.



I'LL
ADD SOME
PUKUSAKINA
WINDFLOWERS
THAT I PICKED
AND DRIED
LAST YEAR.



THEY SAY
PUKUSAKINA
IS ONE OF THE
BEST WILD
VEGETABLES
TO GO WITH
MEAT. IT
MAKES THE
FLAVOR TWICE
AS GOOD.



USUALLY
WE ONLY
MAKE OHAW
FROM
LEFTOVER
MEAT WE
AREN'T
ABLE TO
FINISH
RAW.

BUT I'LL
COOK IT
ALL INTO
OHAW—
SOUP—
SO AN
ELEGANT
SISAM LIKE
YOU CAN
EAT IT
TOO.

MINCEMEAT
SOUP, HUH?
THANKS
FOR THAT.



SINCE WE MIXED
EVEN THE BLOOD
AND BONES INTO
THE CITATAP,
THE JUICE AND
SALTINESS WILL
FLAVOR THE
SOUP.



THIS IS
DELICIOUS!

MMM!



HMPH.
HUFF,
HUFF.



I'LL
HAVE
SOME
THEN!

Mess
kit
lid

ANY LATER AND
HE WOULD HAVE
SUCCEMLED TO
HYPOTHERMIA.

I'M
AMAZED
HE WAS
ABLE TO
CRAWL
UP ON
THE BANK
WITH
THOSE
INJURIES.

WE FOUND
HIM BY THE
RIVERSBANK
AT DUSK.

DID
SOMEONE
ATTACK
HIM IN THE
MOUNTAINS?
WHY WAS
PRIVATE
FIRST CLASS
OGATA OUT
THERE BY
HIMSELF?

WE DON'T
KNOW. WE'LL
HAVE TO
WAIT FOR HIM
TO REGAIN
CONSCIOUS-
NESS...

HINNA,
HINNA.

HINNA,
HINNA!

I LIKE THE
CRUNCHINESS
OF THE
SMALL
BONE
PIECES
LEFT IN
THE SOFT
MEAT!

THE MEAT
DOESN'T
SMELL AT
ALL. AND
THERE'S
A SUBLT
SWEETNESS
ALONG WITH
A SLIGHT
NUTTY
AROMA.

NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM

WE SAY
IT AS
WE EAT.

IT'S
WHAT WE
SAY TO
SHOW
GRATIT-
TUDE
FOR THE
FOOD.

WHAT
DOES
THAT
MEAN
?

HINNA.



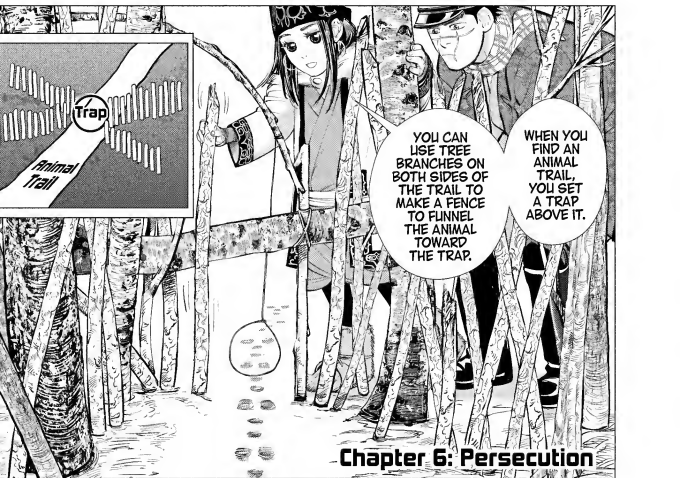
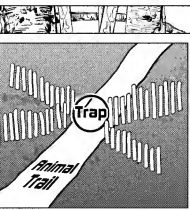


HARES
WILL
AVOID
PLACES
THAT
HAVE
HUMAN
FOOT-
PRINTS.

WATCH
OUT,
SUGIMOTO.
DON'T
STEP
ON THE
ANIMAL
TRAIL.



LOOK,
HARE
TRACKS.

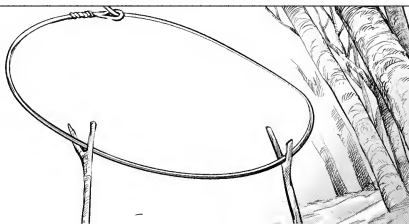


YOU CAN
USE
TREE
BRANCHES ON
BOTH SIDES OF
THE TRAIL TO
MAKE A FENCE
TO FUNNEL
THE ANIMAL
TOWARD
THE TRAP.

WHEN YOU
FIND AN
ANIMAL
TRAIL,
YOU SET
A TRAP
ABOVE IT.

Chapter 6: Persecution

NOW ALL WE NEED
TO DO IS SET A
SNARE AT HEAD
HEIGHT OF THE
PREY. YOU ADJUST
THE HEIGHT OF
THE SNARE WITH
TWIGS...

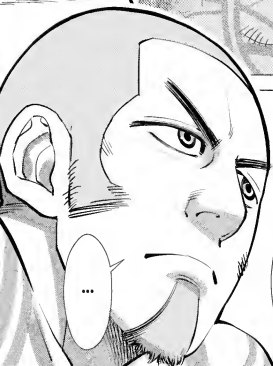




THERE'S
OUR
SECOND
ONE!

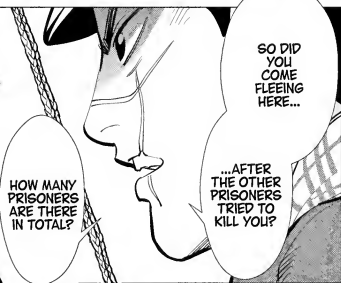
GAKK!

Chapter 6: Persecution



...

HOW MANY PRISONERS ARE THERE IN TOTAL?



SO DID YOU COME FLEEING HERE...

...AFTER THE OTHER PRISONERS TRIED TO KILL YOU?



IS THAT AINU YOUR VERY OWN PET DOG?



THAT SNARE CRUSH YOUR THROAT?

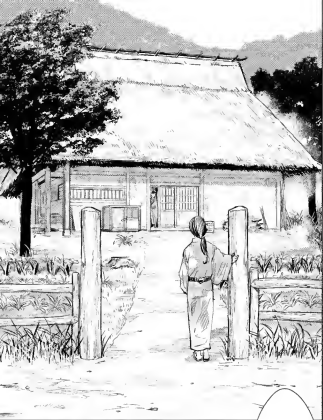


WHERE DID THEY ARRANGE TO MEET WITH NOPPERA-BO'S FRIENDS?



...

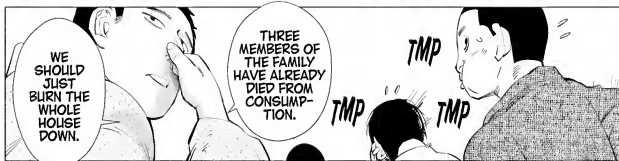






WE HAVE
TO HOLD
OUR
BREATH
AND RUN
STRAIGHT
BY IT.

THE
SUGIMOTO
HOUSE IS
JUST UP
AHEAD.



WE
SHOULD
JUST
BURN THE
WHOLE
HOUSE
DOWN.

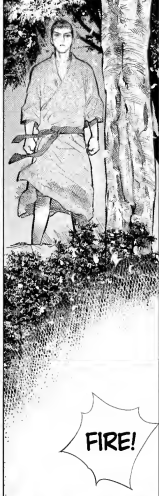
THREE
MEMBERS OF
THE FAMILY
HAVE ALREADY
DIED FROM
CONSUMP-
TION.

TMP

TMP

TMP









I DON'T
WANT
TO KILL
YOU,
LIME.



I
MIGHT
ALREADY
...

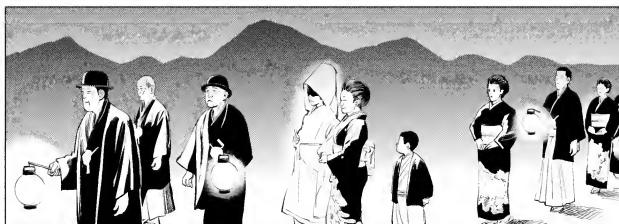
NO...
DON'T
COME
ANY
CLOSER!

I MIGHT
ALREADY
BE SICK
TOO.



I'LL
COME
BACK
FOR
YOU...

I'LL WAIT A
YEAR... NO,
TWO YEARS. IF I
DON'T GET SICK,
I'LL COME BACK
TO THE VILLAGE.





IT'LL THINK
A BIRD
OF PREY
IS FLYING
OVERHEAD,
DUCK FOR
COVER IN
THE SNOW,
AND LAY
STILL.

SUGIMOTO,
THROW
THIS STICK
OVER THE
HARE'S
HEAD.

DON'T YOU
SEE THE
EARS OVER
THERE,
WITH THE
BLACK
TIPS?

WHERE?
I DON'T
SEE IT.

I DON'T
LIKE
HAVING
TO
SCARE
IT LIKE
THAT.

THE ONLY
REASON A
HARE WOULD BE
WANDERING OUT
IN THE DAYTIME IS
IF IT SENSES BAD
WEATHER COMING
AND WANTS TO
TAKE SHELTER.

LET'S
CATCH IT
AND GO
BACK TO
THE HUT
RIGHT
AWAY.

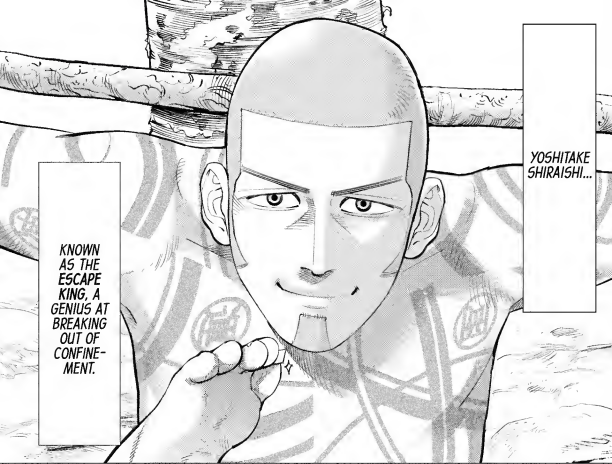
I SEE IT
NOW. BUT
IT'S WELL
HIDDEN,
SO I
DON'T
HAVE A
CLEAR
SHOT.

I DON'T
WANT TO
CARE-
LESSLY
WOUND
IT.

GOOD
TRICK—
I WRAPPED
A RAZOR IN
WATERPROOF
OILED PAPER,
TIED IT TO MY
TOOTH WITH
A STRAND OF
HORSEHAIR,
AND
SWALLOWED
IT.

K
W
U
P

JUST DO
WHAT
I SAY!
I'LL RUN
UP AND
CATCH IT
WITH MY
HANDS.



YOSHITAKE
SHIRAISHI...

KNOWN
AS THE
ESCAPE
KING, A
GENIUS AT
BREAKING
OUT OF
CONFINEMENT.

SIGN: KABATO PRISON

...I HAVE
NEEDLES,
WIRES
AND OTHER
TOOLS
HIDDEN
ALL OVER
MY BODY
SO I CAN
ESCAPE.

EVEN IF I
MESS UP
AND GET
CAUGHT...

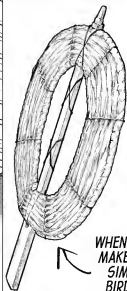
SHIRAISHI'S
BODY IS
UNIQUE, AS
HE IS ABLE TO
DISLOCATE ANY
OF HIS JOINTS
AT WILL.

ORIGINALLY
IMPRISONED
FOR
ROBBERY,
BUT AFTER
MANY
ESCAPES...

HE EVEN
ESCAPED THROUGH
THE EXTREMELY
NARROW VIEWING
WINDOW
OF HIS CELL.

...HIS
SENTENCE
FOR
ESCAPING
BECAME
MUCH
LONGER
THAN HIS
ORIGINAL
SENTENCE
FOR
ROBBERY.

梅子集伝



THE MATAGI HUNTERS IN THE TOHOKU REGION USE A HUNTING STICK CALLED WARUDA UCHI BY MAKING A RING SHAPE FROM STRAW.

WHEN THROWN, IT MAKES A SOUND SIMILAR TO A BIRD OF PREY.



IT'S KNOWN AS A RABBIT STICK IN AMERICA.

THIS HUNTING METHOD EXPLOITS THE HARE'S OWN INSTINCTS.

SQUEAK!

GOTCHA!

ZSSSHHH

NO WAY!
HOW THE
HELL DID
HE...

BEHIND
YOU!

WHAT
?!

LOOK,
SUGI-
MOTO!
I GOT
THE...

ASIRPA, GO
BACK TO
THE HUT!
I'LL COME
BACK ONCE
I CATCH
THIS GUY!

DON'T
FOLLOW HIM
TOO FAR,
SUGIMOTO!
THE
WEATHER IS
GOING TO
TURN...

YOU
BASTARD
...

KR
A
K
K
A
M

GET BACK
HERE
OR I'LL
SHOOT!

GUNFIRE?

SHOOT
THEN! IF
I DON'T
GET SHOT
NOW, I'LL
JUST GET
SHOT LATER
ANYWAY!



AND IT WAS
HEADING
STRAIGHT FOR
SUGIMOTO.

IT WAS THE
SOUND OF
A MINUS-
30-DEGREE
CELSIUS
WAVE OF
COLD AIR
RUSHING
DOWN FROM
THE TOP
OF THE
MOUNTAIN.

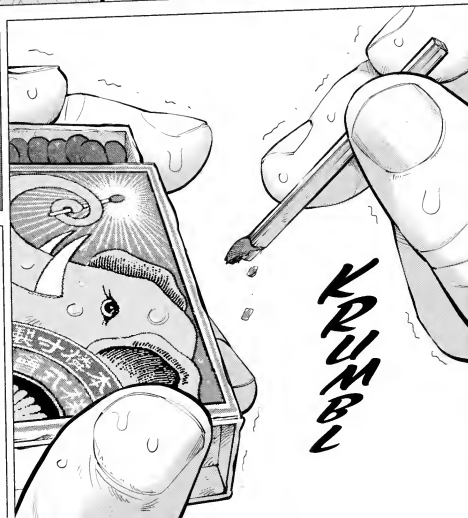
IT'S A
NI PLUS
HUM!

IN THE AINU LANGUAGE,
NI PLUS HUM MEANS "SOUND
OF SPLITTING TREES." IT IS
A PHENOMENON IN WHICH
SAP INSIDE TREES FREEZES
FROM A SUDDEN, EXTREME
DROP IN TEMPERATURE, AND
CAUSES THE TRUNKS TO
SPLIT OPEN.

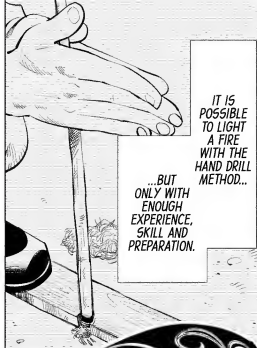


Chapter 7: The Escape King





THEY ONLY HAVE TEN MINUTES TO ACT BEFORE THE COLD KILLS THEM! THEIR BODIES WILL SLOW AND WEAKEN, THEIR LIMBS WILL STOP MOVING, AND SOON ENOUGH THEY WILL DIE.



**I AM
IMMORTAL
SLIGIMOTO
!!**



DAMMIT!

I AM
NOT
GIVING
UP!

NEVER!

I WILL
MAKE
IT OUT
OF THIS
ALIVE!

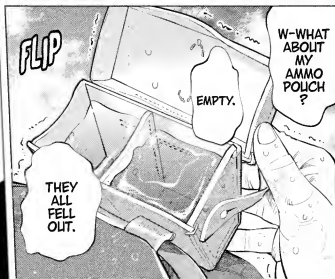
...IT'LL
CAUSE
A
SPARK
AND
START
A FIRE!

**FIZ
SH
SH**

IF I TAKE
THE BULLET
FROM ITS
CASING
AND FIRE
AT THE
KINDLING...



I-IS
THAT
IT UP
THERE?!



FLIP

EMPTY.

W-WHAT
ABOUT
MY
AMMO
POUCH
?

THEY
ALL
FELL
OUT.



THIS IS
THE ONLY
W-WAY! IF
WE DON'T,
WE'RE
BOTH
D-DONE
FOR!

HEF HEF
SPLASH SPLASH

...M-
MAKE A
DEAL!

THIS IS
NO TIME
TO...

W-WE
WERE
GOING TO
K-KEEP
YOU
CAPTIVE...

...UNTIL
WE
F-FOUND
THE
GOLD!

I-IF I
WANTED
TO KILL
YOU,
D-DO YOU
THINK I
WOULD'VE
COPIED
YOUR
TATTOO?!

IF I'M
GONNA
DIE
ANYWAY...
I'LL JUST
SIT HERE
AND
WATCH
YOU
FREEZE
TO
DEATH
FIRST!

...OR
NOT?!

ARE YOU
GOING TO
T-TAKE THE
DEAL...

NOW HURRY
UP AND HELP
ME FIND THE
CARTRIDGES!!

F-FINE!!
DEAL!



SH







NO IDEA
HOW
MANY
ARE
STILL
ALIVE...

24.

THAT'S
HOW MANY
TATTOOED
PRISONERS
THERE ARE.



WHAT
KIND OF
MAN IS
HE?



I DON'T
KNOW
ANYTHING
ABOUT
NOPPERA-
BO'S
GANG,
THOUGH.

THE
ONLY
PERSON
WHO MAY
KNOW
SOMETHING
IS THE
LEADER
WHO TOOK
CHARGE
OF THE
ESCAPE.



AND
THIS IS
JUST A
RUMOR,
BUT...

HE
WAS A
SAMURAI
OF THE
FORMER
EDO
BAKUFU
ARMY.

...SOME-
ONE
OVER-
HEARD
THE
WARDENS
TALKING
ABOUT
HIM.



I LATER FOUND
OUT THAT HE
FOUGHT ON
THE LOSING
SIDE OF THE
BATTLE OF
HAKODATE
SOME
30 YEARS
AGO.



RIGHT IN
FRONT OF
MY EYES, HE
GRABBED A
SWORD FROM
A SOLDIER AND
KILLED THREE OF
THEM IN AN
INSTANT.



I
THOUGHT
HE WAS
JUST
SOME OLD
POLITICAL
PRISONER.
A MODEL
PRISONER.

BUT IT
TURNS
OUT
THAT IT
WAS ALL
AN ACT.



**...HE'S
ACTUALLY
THE
MERCILESS
VICE
COMMANDER
OF THE
SHINSENGUMI.**

APPARENTLY,
THEY ALL
THOUGHT
THE OLD
MAN HAD
DIED AT THE
BATTLE OF
HAKODATE,
BUT...

**TOSHIZO
HIJIKATA!**

...OR
SO
THEY
SAY.



"HEAD FOR OTARU."

NOPPERA-BO
TOLD ALL
OF US
PRISONERS...



AND I'LL
TELL
YOU ONE
MORE
THING.



THE OTHER
PRISONERS
AND NOPPERA-
BO'S GANG
AREN'T THE
ONLY PEOPLE
LOOKING
FOR THE
TATTOOS.

SO STOP
LOOKING FOR
THE GOLD
AND LEAVE
HOKKAIDO
AS SOON AS
YOU CAN.

YOU SAID
YOUR NAME
IS SHIRAISHI,
RIGHT? NEXT
TIME I SEE
YOU, I'M
PEELING THAT
TATTOO OFF
YOU.



SEE YA
AROUND
...

...IMMORTAL
SUGIMOTO!



EVEN IF
THEY
CATCH ME,
I'LL JUST
VANISH
LIKE
SMOKE.

**I'M THE
ESCAPE
KING!**



A BUNCH
OF TATTOOED
SKIN DOESN'T
NEED TO EAT,
IT'S EASY
TO CARRY
AROUND, AND
WON'T TRY TO
ESCAPE LIKE
YOU.

IT'S MORE
EFFICIENT
TO JUST
KILL YOU
AND SKIN
YOU.

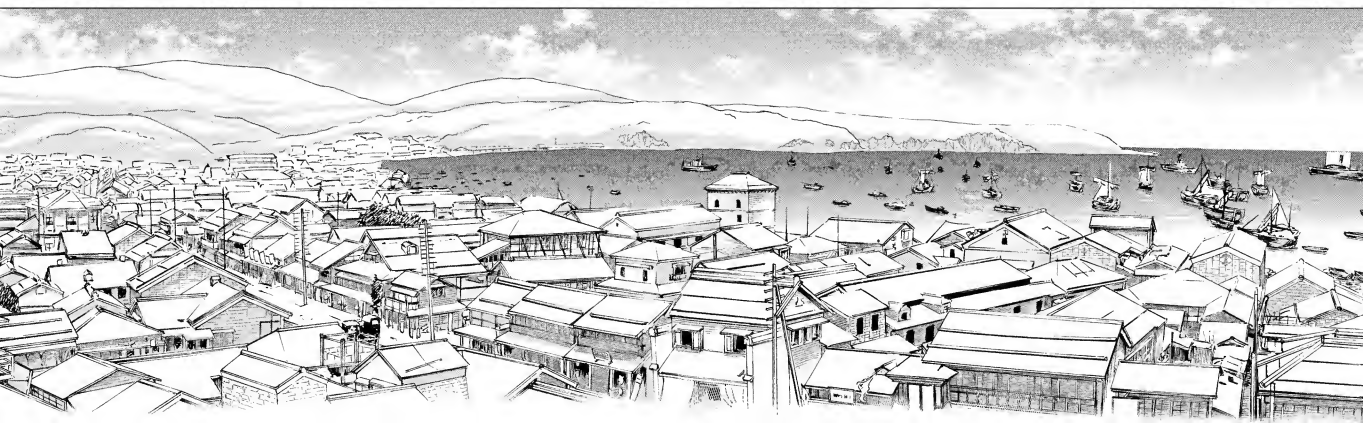
...THEY'RE
NOT THE
TYPE
WHO TAKE
PRISONERS
OR COPY
TATTOOS.

AND
I'M
GUESS-
ING...



THE 7TH
DIVISION,
SOL-
DIERS...

...WHO
FOUGHT IN
THE RUSSO-
JAPANESE WAR,
ARE AFTER
THE GOLD TOO.
THEY'RE ALL
EXPERIENCED,
SEASONED
COMBAT
VETERANS.





OBATA HAS
REGAINED
CONSCIOUS-
NESS.

LIEU-
TENANT
TSURUMI!

I
SEE.

LET'S
GO PAY
HIM A
VISIT
THEN,
SHALL
WE?

GOLDEN KAMUY - VOLUME I - END

Ainu Language Supervision • Hiroshi Nakagawa

Cooperation from • Hokkaido Ainu
Association and the Abashiri Prison Museum

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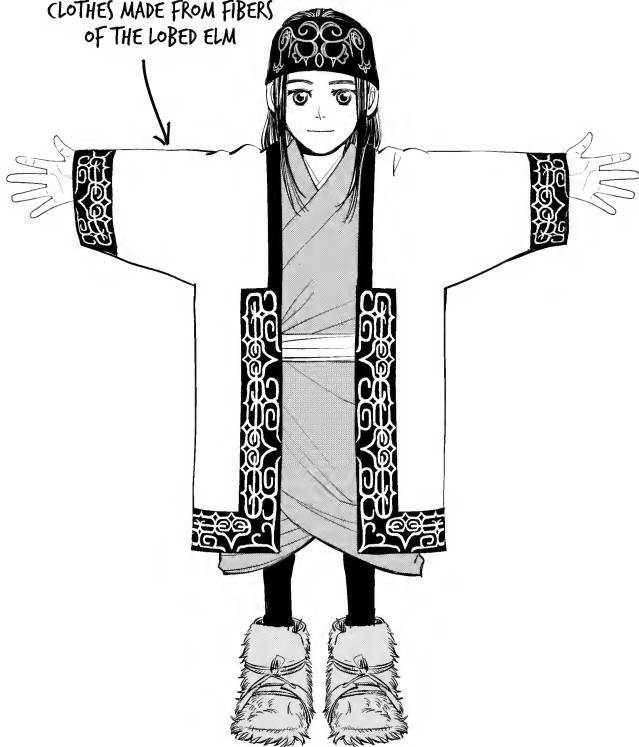
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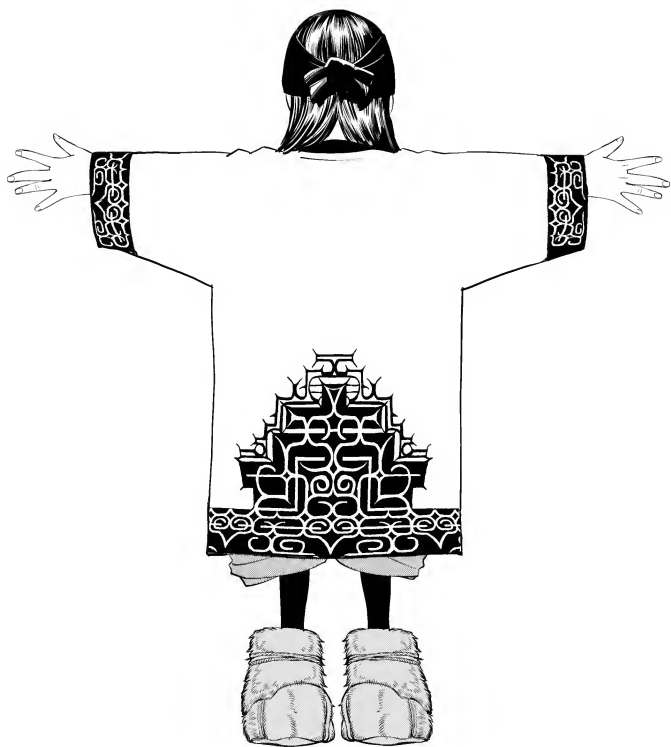
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ATTUS (BARK CLOTHING)

CLOTHES MADE FROM FIBERS
OF THE LOBED ELM





Kanto or wa yaku sak no arankep sinep ka isam.

Nothing comes from heaven without purpose. —Ainu proverb